



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

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State To Begin Posting Names Of Deficient Taxpayers On Internet

ATLANTA – On Feb. 9, Georgia citizens with Internet access will be able to review a list on the Georgia Department of Revenue's web site naming individuals and business that are not paying their state taxes.

"We intend to take advantage of the authorization given the Department during the 2003 session of the Georgia legislature and begin publishing the names of individuals and businesses that have a deficient tax account with the Department," said Revenue Commissioner Bart L. Graham.

The list will contain the names of 200 individuals and 200 businesses, which the Department has recorded public liens against with the superior court where the individual resides or the business is located.

"The individuals and businesses appearing on the list should not be surprised. The Department has mailed a minimum of three official notices to each of the list entries and they choose to ignore our efforts," said the Commissioner.

Georgia statute 48-3-29 states that "the commissioner may publish in the media or on the internet for public access any or all information with respect to executions issued for the collection of any tax, fee, license, penalty, interest, or collection costs due the state which are recorded on the public records of any county. The publication provided for in this Code section shall not constitute an unlawful disclosure of any information even though the executions giving rise to the information may be subsequently partially paid, paid and canceled, or withdrawn."

South Carolina began posting names on its "Debtor's Corner" in April 2001 and North Carolina's "Tax Debtors" was initiated in January 2002. Connecticut, which began its "Top 100" in 1997, has collected more than \$161 million through its Internet postings.

"We intend to use all the resources—like the Internet, garnishments, private collection agencies and liens – to collect the taxes owed. We intend to treat everyone in a fair and equitable way but we will not be ignored," Commissioner Graham stated.

The Georgia Department of Revenue estimates that approximately 420,693 taxpayers with deficient accounts dating back to 1988 owe the state more than \$1.6 billion.

"We believe these postings will help reduce the number of taxpayers with deficient accounts, which will help lower the expenses we incur to bring these individuals into compliance with the state's tax laws," explained Commissioner Graham.

The Department's web site address is www.gatax.org.

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